

# TEXAS HUNTING INCIDENT ANALYSIS



**2018**

Federal Aid Project  
W-104-S



# TEXAS HUNTING INCIDENT DATA (1966-2018)

## \* *Voluntary* \* Hunter Education Program 1972-1987

Calendar Year	Fatalities	Non-Fatal	Accidents	Hunting Licenses Sold	Accidents/ 100,000 Licenses	Fatalities/ 100,000 Licenses	Students Certified
1966	28	53	81	644,653	12.6	4.3	-
1967	23	70	93	797,846	11.7	2.9	-
1968	37	68	105	854,693	12.3	4.3	-
1969	24	68	92	895,593	10.3	2.7	-
1970	19	53	72	935,793	7.7	2.0	-
1971	24	68	92	978,285	9.4	2.5	-
1972	30	55	85	966,332	8.8	3.1	2,119
1973	22	58	80	1,011,963	7.9	2.2	4,314
1974	16	52	68	1,037,925	6.6	1.5	6,094
1975	11	66	77	1,051,834	7.3	1.0	8,531
1976	11	52	63	1,050,349	6	1.0	10,043
1977	17	64	81	1,080,530	7.5	1.6	11,298
1978	20	63	83	1,091,794	7.6	1.8	10,890
1979	10	43	53	1,093,716	4.8	0.9	10,775
1980	13	56	69	1,160,375	5.9	1.1	12,166
1981	19	53	72	1,174,023	6.1	1.6	13,187
1982	23	74	97	1,216,032	8	1.9	13,323
1983	17	63	80	1,325,474	6	1.3	14,131
1984	21	39	60	1,140,174	5.3	1.8	13,052
1985	15	57	72	1,100,991	6.5	1.4	11,284
1986	13	55	68	1,162,785	5.8	1.1	11,195
1987	12	69	81	1,189,566	6.8	1.0	8,611
<b>Voluntary</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>1299</b>	<b>1724</b>	<b>22,960,726</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>161,013</b>



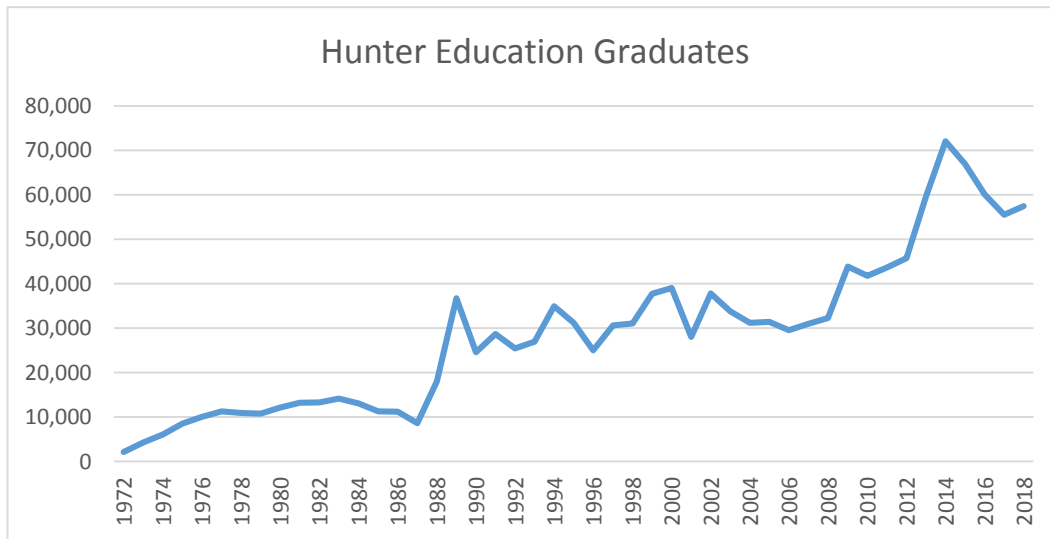
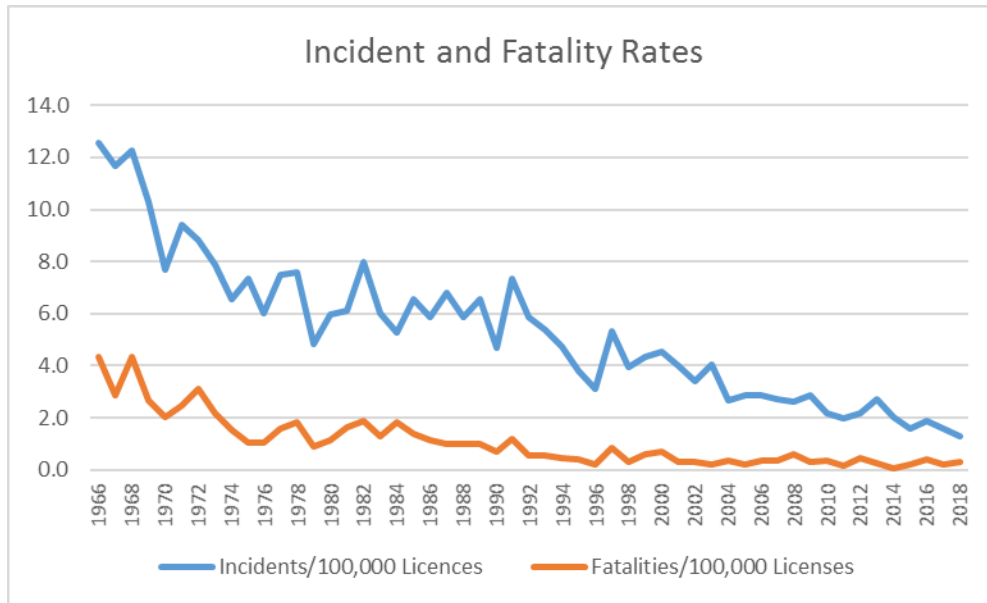
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## \* *Mandatory* \* Hunter Education Program 1988 - Present

Calendar Year	Fatal	Non-Fatal	Accidents	Hunting Licenses Sold	Accidents/ 100,000 Licenses	Fatalities/ 100,000 Licenses	Students Certified	Deferrals Sold
1988	12	58	70	1,189,000	5.9	1.0	18,043	
1989	12	66	78	1,193,000	6.5	1.0	36,708	
1990	8	45	53	1,132,917	4.7	0.7	24,590	
1991	13	68	81	1,103,903	7.3	1.2	28,682	
1992	6	56	62	1,053,063	5.9	0.6	25,453	
1993	6	52	58	1,077,055	5.4	0.6	26,942	
1994	5	46	51	1,083,227	4.7	0.5	34,972	
1995	4	36	40	1,060,000	3.8	0.4	31,215	
1996	2	29	31	990,000	3.1	0.2	24,998	
1997	8	43	51	960,000	5.3	0.8	30,625	
1998	3	37	40	1,011,500	3.9	0.3	31,052	
1999	6	38	44	1,010,455	4.3	0.6	37,775	
2000	8	44	52	1,145,000	4.5	0.7	39,049	
2001	3	40	43	1,076,159	4	0.3	28,062	
2002	3	32	35	1,024,495	3.4	0.3	37,847	
2003	2	42	44	1,082,225	4.1	0.2	33,769	
2004	4	25	29	1,091,178	2.7	0.4	31,171	
2005	2	29	31	1,082,593	2.9	0.2	31,442	
2006	4	28	32	1,115,772	2.9	0.4	29,532	
2007	4	26	30	1,112,099	2.7	0.4	30,960	
2008	6	20	26	993,533	2.6	0.6	32,308	
2009	3	26	29	1,011,936	2.9	0.3	43,880	12,545
2010	4	21	25	1,141,924	2.2	0.4	41,785	13,997
2011	2	21	23	1,165,248	2	0.2	43,645	15,101
2012	5	20	25	1,155,542	2.2	0.4	45,719	15,438
2013	3	30	33	1,227,025	2.7	0.2	59,597	17,257
2014	2	24	26	1,284,933	2.0	0.2	72,026	11,898
2015	2	18	20	1,259,259	1.6	0.2	66,961	14,025
2016	5	19	24	1,271,368	1.9	0.4	60,115	14,371
2017	2	19	21	1,248,450	1.7	0.2	55,507	12,113
<b>2018</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1,235,590</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>57,440</b>	<b>11,004</b>
Mandatory	151	1,073	1,224	34,588,449	3.5	0.44	1,193,405	137,749
TOTAL	576	2,372	2,948	57,549,175	5.1	1.00	1,354,418	137,749

- HUNTING INCIDENT RATE (AVE.) DURING VOLUNTARY PROGRAM - 7.5 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.
- HUNTING INCIDENT RATE (AVE.) DURING MANDATORY PROGRAM - 3.5 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.
- HUNTING FATALITY RATE (AVE.) DURING VOLUNTARY PROGRAM - 1.85 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.
- HUNTING FATALITY RATE (AVE.) DURING MANDATORY PROGRAM - 0.44 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.



## Texas Hunting Incidents 2013 – 2018

\* TYPE "A" Incidents - resulting from a discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes the injury or death of any person(s)

INCIDENTS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Fatal</b>	2	2	5	2	3
<b>Non-fatal</b>	24	18	19	19	14

SHOOTER'S AGE					
0-9 yrs. of age	2	1	0	0	1
10-19	8	1	5	7	3
20-29	3	3	3	5	4
30-39	3	1	4	3	3
40-49	5	4	3	0	2
50-59	1	4	4	3	2
60 & over	2	5	3	2	1
Unknown	2	1	2	1	1
	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>

SHOOTER'S EQUIPMENT					
Rifles	8	4	6	5	7
Shotguns	17	15	14	13	7
Handguns	1	1	3	3	3
Muzzleloader	0	0	0	0	0
Bow/Air Gun	0	0	1	0	0
	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>

ADDITIONAL FACTS					
	Percentage in parenthesis (%)				
Violated Game Law	5 (19)	3 (15)	5 (21)	9 (43)	3 (18)
Self-Inflicted	6 (23)	6 (30)	6 (25)	8 (38)	6 (35)
Alcohol or Drugs a Factor	3 (11)	2 (10)	2 (8)	1 (5)	2 (12)
Shooter Completed Hunter Ed	9 (35)	10 (50)	10 (42)	5 (24)	8 (47)
ONLINE-ONLY HE	1 (4)	2 (10)	3 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)

### Incident profile over time:

- Incidents were highly preventable thru proper training
- Over half had not completed hunter education training
- Victims were not wearing hunter orange clothing
- Most incidents due to hunter judgment errors; carelessness
- Most shooters had over 10 years of hunting experience
- Most shooters were not under the influence of alcohol
- If self-inflicted, shooters handled firearms carelessly
- Distance of muzzle to wound was generally under 15 yards
- Incident occurred towards dusk; fatigue a possible factor

### Significant for 2018

- All but one incident occurred in HUNTER JUDGMENT and SKILL & APTITUDE categories
- A slight increase in fatal incidents (up 1) in 2018
- CARELESS HANDLING led the list of incidents with five (5) - followed by IN LINE OF FIRE/OUT OF SIGHT errors
- HOG hunting, with eight (8), now leads the list of animals hunted at time of incident; DOVES way down in 2018
- Modern Sporting Rifles were prevalent in HOG incidents
- SHOTGUNS and RIFLES tied for the first time
- Eight (8) HUNTER EDUCATION graduates were involved in hunting incidents; none from ONLINE-ONLY courses
- Two incidents (12%) involved ALCOHOL, and 3 (18%) involved LAW VIOLATIONS, significantly down in 2018

MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>HUNTER JUDGMENT</b>					
Victim out of sight / moved into line of fire	4	2	5	3	4
Victim hit by shooter swinging on game	9	11	5	5	3
Victim mistaken for game	3	0	2	2	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

SKILL/APTITUDE					
Trigger caught on object	1	0	0	0	0
Loading/Unloading gun	1	0	1	1	3
Improper crossing	0	0	1	0	0
Careless handling	5	5	6	7	5
Dropped firearm	0	0	0	1	0
Shooter stumbled/fell	1	0	1	0	1
Careless Bow Handling	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>

SAFETY					
Removing/placing firearm in vehicle	0	0	0	1	0
Discharge of firearm in/on vehicle	2	1	1	0	1
Running or entering/exiting stand with loaded firearm	0	0	1	0	0
Horseplay	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to use fall restraint	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

OTHER					
Ricochet	0	0	0	0	0
Obstruction in Barrel or Faulty Equipment	0	0	1	0	0
Mixed Ammo/Incorrect Substitution	0	1	0	1	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>

ANIMAL HUNTED					
Dove	12	12	7	8	1
Deer	6	2	3	2	2
Rabbit/Hare	1	1	1	1	0
Feral Hog/Peccary	1	1	2	4	8
Quail/Pheasant	4	3	4	2	3
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0
Ducks/Geese	0	0	2	2	1
Coyote/Bobcat	0	0	1	0	0
Squirrel/Prairie Dog	1	1	1	0	1
Nongame birds/Snake	0	0	1	2	0
Furbearers/Raccoons	0	0	1	0	0
Exotic	1	0	1	0	1
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>

## 2018 FATAL INCIDENTS - FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (A)\*

\* Firearm/Bow & Hunting Related--an accident/incident resulting from the discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes the injury or death of any person(s).

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
1-4	Leon	7/M	Rifle	Squirrel	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Three hunters returned to their truck and as the 7-year old son was attempting to unload his .22 caliber rifle near the driver's side of the pick-up, he carelessly discharged it towards his father who was standing behind the tailgate. Victim was air lifted to a local hospital after hunting group called 911.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction, especially when loading or unloading the firearm; keep finger outside the trigger guard and unload immediately after the hunt, prior to returning to a vehicle; handle firearms carefully; prior to transport, place unloaded firearm into secure case with action open and separate from the ammunition; parents/guardians should stay within arm's length and constantly supervise youngster's handling of a firearm, especially when loading/unloading.					
1-7	Webb	UNK/M	Rifle	Deer	No	UNK
<i>Comments:</i>	Two hunters were hunting deer with their modern sporting rifles and upon discharge of one of the rifles, the bullet fatally struck the victim who was sitting in a 14' tripod about 300 yards from shooter. The two hunters had consumed alcohol. Incident underwent further investigation.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; clearly identify the target, what is in front of it and beyond it; use binoculars to identify game; wear hunter/blaze orange to be seen; obey hunting laws; do not take mood-altering alcohol, medicines or drugs when hunting; complete hunter education.					
10-7	Gonzales	49/M	Rifle	Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim exited an elevated ladder stand in front of shooter who passed down his loaded modern sporting rifle to the victim. Victim set the loaded rifle against a chair at the bottom of the stand. As shooter exited the stand, he slipped and fell onto the rifle which discharged. Bullet struck the victim in the back of the head.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; keep finger outside the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot; handle firearms carefully; always unload when no longer hunting and especially prior to exiting any stand - ground or elevated; always place firearm against a secure rest, making sure action is open and firearm is unloaded; always maintain three points of contact when climbing up/down a ladder; complete hunter education, even if not required.					

## 2018 NON-FATAL INCIDENTS - FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (A)\*

\* Firearm/Bow & Hunting Related-- accidents/incidents resulting from the discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes the injury or death of any person(s).

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
1-10	Webb	21/M	Handgun	Hog	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was "relieving himself" while carrying a loaded revolver with the hammer engaged. As he pulled his pants back up, he carelessly discharged the handgun. The bullet struck him in the right upper thigh.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; keep finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot; handle firearms carefully; always unload before properly holstering a handgun; apply what was learned in hunter education.					

<b>Date</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Shooter's Age/Gender</b>	<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Animal Hunted</b>	<b>Self-Inflicted?</b>	<b>Hunter Ed?</b>
<b>1-27</b>	<b>Shackelford</b>	<b>59/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Quail</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter swung on victim outside of his safe zone of fire. Victim stopped to take a photo of the pointing dogs, temporarily getting out of position. As he returned to get in position, the quail flushed and shooter thought he had a clear shot, claiming that sun was also in his eyes.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
<b>1-28</b>	<b>Andrews</b>	<b>67/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Quail</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter swung on victim outside of his safe zone of fire. Shooter claimed he did not know position of victim. Victim was struck by multiple 20-ga. pellets to face, arm, shoulder and thigh.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
<b>2-3</b>	<b>Milam</b>	<b>30/M</b>	<b>Handgun</b>	<b>Hog</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim rested handgun muzzle on his hand while shooting a hog at night and was simultaneously trying to shine a flashlight towards the hog. He claimed he thought the muzzle was the handguard to the pistol, shooting it offhand as well.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; maintain safe muzzle control and direction while shooting a firearm; use proper hold techniques for handguns; if hunting at night, never try to hold a light and shoot a firearm at the same time; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
<b>3-25</b>	<b>Howard</b>	<b>37/M</b>	<b>Rifle</b>	<b>Exotic (Deer)</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes (NY)</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was loading his rifle next to a UHV in which the victim was located, and carelessly discharged the firearm in the process. Bullet from 300 Win Mag traveled through front, right seat then the middle frame of the UHV, prior to grazing the victim in the back of his leg.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction, especially when loading or unloading the firearm; handle firearms carefully; never hunt from a vehicle and keep fingers outside the trigger guard and the safety on until ready to shoot in the field; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
<b>5-4</b>	<b>Polk</b>	<b>19/M</b>	<b>Handgun</b>	<b>Hog</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim discharged his handgun from inside the vehicle towards a group of hogs, and a bullet fragment struck him in his left hand after an apparent ricochet off of the vehicle itself.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; never hunt from a vehicle and keep fingers outside the trigger guard and safety on until ready to shoot in the field; carry firearms in vehicles unloaded, cased and separate from the ammunition; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
<b>6-9</b>	<b>Limestone</b>	<b>50/M</b>	<b>Rifle</b>	<b>Hog</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Two hunters were hunting hogs with their modern sporting rifles and shooter claims to have lost sight of victim who had moved into his line of fire during the shot. The bullet entered through victim's left elbow.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
<b>7-23</b>	<b>Denton</b>	<b>19/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Hog</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim and his friend were hunting hogs on a public WMA, and he got mud stuck in the end of his 12-ga. shotgun. He carelessly discharged it when he banged the butt against the ground, while simultaneously sticking his finger in the muzzle to extract mud. He suffered damage to his left hand. He and his friend had smoked marijuana and consumed alcohol during their hunt.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload firearm and disassemble prior to clearing obstructions from barrel; carry a field cleaning kit for your firearm; obey hunting laws; never take mood-altering alcohol, medicines or drugs when hunting; complete hunter education, especially when required.					

<b>Date</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Shooter's Age/Gender</b>	<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Animal Hunted</b>	<b>Self-Inflicted?</b>	<b>Hunter Ed?</b>
<b>9-2</b>	<b>Llano</b>	<b>44/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Dove</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim and his hunting party moved in on another hunting party and then backed off and positioned themselves behind a hill out of sight of the first hunting party. Victim was struck by pellets near his eye as the original party took shots at low-flying doves, not realizing where the victim's party had positioned themselves.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are positioned at all times; identify the target clearly, what is in front of/behind the target before shooting; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
<b>10-27</b>	<b>Bailey</b>	<b>33/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Quail</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter swung on victim outside of his safe zone of fire. Victim and another hunter were retrieving a downed bird and were positioned in front of shooter about 20-30 yards at the time of the shot. Victim was not wearing hunter orange and was struck by two pellets in the arm.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; always wear hunter orange while hunting upland game; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
<b>12-11</b>	<b>Cameron</b>	<b>20/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Waterfowl</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim carelessly discharged his shotgun towards his foot as he was rising from his lay-down position to shoot at some incoming ducks. He had taken his safety off just prior to rising up.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; keep the safety 'on' and finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot; handle firearm carefully, especially when changing body positions; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
<b>12-15</b>	<b>Delta</b>	<b>27/M</b>	<b>Shotgun</b>	<b>Hog</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was out of sight of shooter and was struck by two buckshot to his abdomen and leg from about 120 yards. Shooter was firing at a hog at what he estimated to be 80 yards, in front of the victim, about 30 minutes after sunset. Shooter (LA) also did not have a valid hunting license.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly, what is in front of/behind the target before shooting; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
<b>12-17</b>	<b>Van Zandt</b>	<b>23/M</b>	<b>Rifle</b>	<b>Hog</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim carelessly discharged his modern sporting rifle towards his foot/ankle as he was losing control of it from his grasp. He was on the way to his stand and was also carrying a thermos and flashlight and had dropped the thermos trying to grab it on the way down as well.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload firearm with action open when not hunting such as on the way to a stand; keep finger outside the trigger guard unless in the act of firing a shot; only load when in the field/stand and ready to take a shot at game; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
<b>12-30</b>	<b>Dimmit</b>	<b>16/M</b>	<b>Rifle</b>	<b>Deer</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<i>Comments:</i>	In the process of unloading his .270 rifle from the passenger side of the vehicle, shooter carelessly discharged it towards his father who was standing outside the driver's side of the vehicle. Bullet passed through the upper leg of the victim.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload prior to transporting firearms and no longer hunting; communicate with your hunting partners if they get out of position; never carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle; maintain safe muzzle control and direction while loading/unloading; obey the law; apply what was learned in hunter education.					



**2018 NON-FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (B) \*\***

Type	Age/Gender	Fatal?	Comments
Helicopter Crash 5-9-18	Various Ages Wounded Warriors	No	Helicopter carrying hog hunters did not quite clear the trees upon takeoff and crashed back to earth. Pilot and passengers escaped fatal injuries.
Fall from elevated stand 11-22-18	35/M	No	Victim was sitting in a tripod and as he turned, the seat broke causing him to fall and break his collar bone.
ATV Accident 12-1-18	55/M	Yes	Victim went down a steep hill on his ATV when it flipped and crushed him, blocking his air passage. He was found dead later by his hunting party.

**\*\* B. Non-Firearm/Bow Related** - Accidents/incidents while hunting, not involving the discharge of a firearm or bow, which causes injury or death of any person(s).

**2018 NON-HUNTING/FIREARM RELATED (C) \*\*\***

Type	Age/Gender/ Firearm	Fatal?	Comments
Careless Handling 8-5-18	26/M Handgun	No	Victim was fixing his deer feeders at hunting lease and it was dark so he attempted to grab his spotlight but accidentally grabbed handgun instead, He accidentally discharged it towards his upper right leg in the process of thinking he was activating the lever on his spotlight.

**\*\*\* C. Non-Hunting Related** - Other reported accidents/incidents resulting from the discharge of a firearm/bow, which causes the injury or death of any person(s), other than while hunting (reported to TPWD Game Wardens)